

THE LIBERATION OF IRAQ: A PROGRESS REPORT

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND
SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

JUNE 28, 2000

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/senate>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

68-120 CC

WASHINGTON : 2000

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2000

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN
AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:10 a.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Sam Brownback (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senator Brownback.

Senator BROWNBAC. The hearing will come to order. Mr. Perle, Dr. Chalabi, delighted to have you here. Welcome to both of you. We are very pleased to see both of you here to review U.S. policy toward Iraq, and in particular to review the Clinton-Gore administration's progress in implementing the Iraq Liberation Act.

As we have done this drill several times before, I think you will have some idea just how I feel about the administration's commitment to liberating Iraq. To put it as straightforwardly as possible, I cannot understand why President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act when he had absolutely no intent of implementing the provisions of the law.

It is hard for me to figure out why administration officials, from President Clinton and Vice President Gore on down, keep insisting they are interested in ousting Saddam, and yet not one official of this administration has been willing to take even the most minimal steps toward that end.

Let me just review what the Congress, with complete bipartisanship—and I emphasize that, complete bipartisanship—has done trying to press forward on Iraq policy. Since 1998, I count nine House or Senate resolutions calling for democracy in Iraq, nine promoting a war crimes tribunal for Iraq, demanding compliance with U.N. resolutions.

We have authorized tens of millions of dollars to support war crimes research and for the opposition. The only arguments we have had are over how more can be done to promote the overthrow of Saddam and bring him and his cronies to justice. That is the only debate or argument we have had here, is how more, or what else we could do.

As far as the administration is concerned, in the last 2 years alone the Clinton-Gore team has presided over the abolition of UNSCOM, the end of the sanctions review for a significant number of products imported into Iraq, and a staggering—a staggering ero-

sion of international support for isolating the Saddam Hussein regime.

This is not a complex matter, but the Clinton administration has been unable to explain why it is imperative that sanctions remain on Iraq, failed to explain that. They have failed to remind the world at large that Saddam Hussein has killed tens of thousands of his own people, and that it is his choice, and his choice alone, whether sanctions are lifted. That is up to Saddam Hussein. They seem to forget that Saddam's devotion to amassing weapons of mass destruction is the only remaining obstacle to Iraq's rehabilitation. That is it.

As far as the opposition is concerned, the administration has disbursed approximately \$20,000, and I want to emphasize that. The administration has disbursed approximately \$20,000 of the \$97 million in available funds under the Iraq Liberation Act [ILA]. I guess that is for a few fax machines, I am not sure. Of \$10 million appropriated for the opposition and for the prosecution of war crimes in fiscal year 2000, nothing—nothing has been spent.

On Monday, representatives from the Iraqi National Congress, which we will hear from today, have advised President Gore. Miraculously, on Tuesday the administration announced that 140 Iraqi National Congress [INC] men would be trained under the ILA. Now, I am not sure trained for what. I hope we can hear a little bit about that today exactly whether it is going to be trained on how to use those fax machines, or if it is going to be on other things.

They also announced they would support an amendment we have in this year's foreign operations appropriations bill giving \$15 million to the INC for humanitarian deliveries into Iraq. This is the first time since the signature of the Iraq Liberation Act that we have seen someone in this administration galvanized to do something for the opposition.

The usual routine we hear in Congress is cannot do it, will not do it, do not want to do it, do not like them anyway. Most memorably, General Zinni, soon to be former Commander of CENTCOM, announced that the Congress was, quote, in his words "stupid to support the opposition."

Either Saddam is a long-term threat or he is not. If he is, then we must do something. Short of invading Iraq once again, we must support the opposition. The opposition is not a group of Boy Scouts, nor is it a group of Jeffersonian Democrats. It is an agglomeration of very different people and different groups who have been crushed under Saddam Hussein for decades. They are the people willing to work with the United States to overthrow Saddam Hussein. They are the people with the courage to come to us. They have been treated with complete contempt by this administration.

To date, the Vice President has done nothing for this group. Maybe this meeting will mark a turning point. I hope so. Maybe it is just politics as usual. We will find out soon.

I am pleased again to have both of you here. I hope we can get some further illumination from the meeting with the Vice President, and some of your thoughts on this, Mr. Perle, as to what is taking place in the administration and what needs to take place, and what possibly might occur under future administrations.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR SAM BROWNBACK

I cannot understand why President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act when he had absolutely no intention of implementing the provisions of that law. It is hard for me to figure out why administration officials from Clinton and Gore on down keep insisting that they are interested in ousting Saddam, and yet not one official of this administration has been willing to take even the most minimal step toward that end.

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As far as the administration is concerned, in the last two years alone, the Clinton-Gore team has presided over the abolition of UNSCOM, the end of the sanctions review for a significant number of products imported into Iraq, and a staggering erosion of international support for isolating the Saddam Hussein regime.

This is not a complex matter, but the Clinton administration has failed to explain why it is imperative that sanctions remain on Iraq. They have failed to remind the world at large that Saddam Hussein has killed tens of thousands of his own people, and that it is his choice and his choice alone whether sanctions are lifted. They seem to forget that Saddam's devotion to amassing weapons of mass destruction is the only remaining obstacle to Iraq's rehabilitation.

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This is the first time since the signature of the Iraq Liberation Act that we have seen someone in this administration galvanized to do something for the opposition. The usual routine we in the Congress hear is: "can't do it, won't do it, don't want to do it, and don't like them anyway." Most memorably, General Zinni, the soon to be former Commander of Centcom, announced that the Congress was "stupid to support the opposition."

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Senator BROWNBACK. With that, Mr. Perle, let me turn the floor over to you, and I appreciate again your attendance and presentation here at this meeting.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD N. PERLE, FORMER ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY,
WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. PERLE. Thank you very much, Senator. Thank you for including me in these hearings and, perhaps more important, thank you for holding these hearings. It sometimes takes longer than we would wish to see policies adopted and, even when they are adopted and become the law of the land, it sometimes takes much longer than we wish to see them implemented. That clearly is the situation we are now in with respect to the Iraq Liberation Act and the repeated expression by the Congress in both Houses in support of

the strategy for the liberation of Iraq—a strategy very different from the one that now constitutes administration policy.

The word “policy” is probably an overstatement in describing the administrations attitude toward Iraq. Paralysis is probably more appropriate. The administration describes its policy as one of containment, and on any number of occasions administration spokesmen have expressed their satisfaction at a policy that has kept Saddam, as they sometimes put it, in a box, powerless, ineffective, unable to act.

The evidence, however, is overwhelming that during the lifetime of this administration Saddam’s regime has become stronger and not weaker, has exercised more independence of action than before and, while the administration is happy to describe the policy as containment, it is fair to observe that what was once a regime inspected by international inspectors is a regime no longer so inspected.

The inspections that provided the principal means by which we could judge Saddam’s effort to acquire weapons of mass destruction has come to an end, despite the fact that the administration’s own announced goal preceding the bombing campaign against Saddam was the restoration of inspection programs that were terminated unilaterally by Saddam.

Saddam posed a clear and unambiguous challenge. We failed to meet that challenge. If we are able to resume inspections in Iraq, it will be the product of a negotiation with Saddam himself, and I cannot help but observe that any inspection regime to which Saddam agrees and in which he exercises a virtual veto over who is to do the inspecting and under what circumstances cannot be effective.

Saddam will not agree to an inspection regime that has any reasonable prospect of uncovering his covert program to acquire weapons of mass destruction. The fact that he feels free to choose between this inspector and that, giving the approval to one who he believes will be pliable in denying approval, to one who he believes will not, is an indication of how weak and ineffective we have become.

If anyone is in a box, it is not Saddam Hussein. It is the American administration. Not only has the inspection regime which is vital to our comprehensive understanding of what programs Saddam has underway been shattered—even if a reasonable inspection regime could be put in place we have now, owing to the long period in which no inspections have taken place, we have lost much of the data base upon which any reasonable intelligence operation must be based.

Everything that could be moved has been moved. Whatever knowledge we once possessed about where to look has now been taken from us, and we are now back, if we were able to return, looking for a very small object in a very large territory. The prospects of success are very limited.

But not only has the inspection regime been shattered; the political support that has sustained the one constant element of administration policy, which is the sanctions now in place, has been declining rapidly. The coalition that was once arrayed against Saddam is in a shambles. Among the former coalition partners, even

some of our close allies now take the other side and are eager to see the sanctions lifted. Increasingly the world has come to believe that the victim of the sanctions is not Saddam Hussein but innocent civilians, men, women, and children in Iraq.

I think it is very important to be clear on this point. Saddam has manipulated the perception of the impact of the sanctions and has it entirely within his power to bring significant relief to the civilian population of Iraq. Much of the money that has been made available for humanitarian purposes has not been spent, and will not be spent, as long as Saddam can prevent it in order to build pressure against the continuation of the sanctions by creating the impression that only the elimination of the sanctions can restore health to Iraqi women and children and deal with the humanitarian catastrophe that we now see.

So I in no way relieve Saddam Hussein of responsibility for that humanitarian tragedy, but at the same time I think it is important to observe that the sanctions themselves are of declining effectiveness. They are increasingly circumvented. Saddam has found ways around the sanctions in collaboration with others, including some of his former enemies.

There is a steady flow of resources into Iraq that are at Saddam's disposal. The sanctions, among other things, have actually solidified his total control over the Iraqi economy, and so no one can argue that the sanctions are of such force and weight and effectiveness that we can count on them to bring down Saddam's regime. They simply will not, and any belief to the contrary is sadly mistaken.

At any rate, the sanctions will not last forever, because support for them is eroding, and when they are finally lifted, as they almost surely will be, Saddam will expect, and with good reason, a political victory of enormous proportions. He will emerge in the Gulf as the leader who stood up to the United States and the Western world and prevailed. At that point I believe the region will be a much more dangerous place, and the manifest failure of American and allied policy—and here it is largely a failure of American leadership—will be evident to everyone.

But by then it will be too late, and I fear that the administration calculates that too late will come after the next Presidential election. The evidence is overwhelming that their short-term objective is to get past the election without a more visible catastrophe, and that is probably their long-term objective as well.

Mr. Chairman, in contrast to this policy of drift, deterioration, and ineffectiveness the Congress has—in a series of actions that I believe are without precedent—empowered the administration to organize and assist the internal opposition to Saddam Hussein.

As one would expect, a ruler like Saddam Hussein, who rules by terror, who rules by murder and assassination, has accumulated over the years a great many enemies. In fact, the number of victims is so large that they alone would constitute an inchoate revolutionary force. So the issue for the West in my view is how best to organize that opposition, to assist it, to forge it into an instrument by which Saddam's murderous regime might be brought down.

The term “freedom fighters” is an entirely appropriate term, and the Iraqi National Congress has for many years been organized along lines expressing support for democratic principles. It has been comprehensively organized, affecting all elements of Iraqi society. It has deserved and indeed received the support of the Congress of the United States and, as you well know Mr. Chairman, as a leader in this effort, the Congress has appropriated money and other resources to assist the INC.

We should be very clear about the administration’s attitude toward this approach. It is one of opposition—flat out, unmitigated opposition—and at every turn the administration has sought to frustrate the congressional intent by withholding the resources that you have offered to them to assist the Iraqi National Congress and even, I am sorry to say, by acting in a manner calculated not to unite the opposition but even to divide it.

There is very substantial evidence that the administration and various elements of the executive branch have actually worked to exploit those differences that one would expect to find in any coalition group, differences that make it more, not less difficult to achieve the goals of the Iraq Liberation Act, which is the formation of a coherent opposition.

I know this because, like others in this small town, I frequently discuss this matter with officials from the administration, sometimes in rather formal debate and other times in casual conversation, and I think I can say to you that I have never had a conversation with any official in the administration on this matter in which those officials did not state that they thought the policy reflected in the Iraq Liberation Act was a mistake, and should not be implemented, and they have given expression to that conviction by dragging their feet endlessly, and by failing actually to do what the Iraq Liberation Act calls upon them to do.

As you rightly observed, in the last 24 hours the Vice President, candidate for the Presidency, has met with the Iraqi National Congress and once again made pledges of support to the Iraqi National Congress.

I do not know whether he took his earlier pledges of support off the word processor and changed the date, or whether he drafted a new set of talking points, but I do know that in August 1993 the same Vice President, who was not then a Presidential candidate, gave a very full expression of support to the Iraqi National Congress.

That preceded by almost 3 years a military operation by Saddam against the Iraqi National Congress in which a great many people working with the United States, and who had placed trust and confidence in the United States were executed by Saddam Hussein. I do not recall the Vice President on that occasion taking any action whatsoever to keep the commitment that was made then.

Hope springs eternal, and maybe this time he means it. But it is still, it seems to me, a commitment that falls far short of the kind of vigorous program that would give the policy behind the Iraq Liberation Act a decent chance for success.

Let me conclude by saying what I think is required in this case. It is the administration’s conviction that attempting to assist the INC is unwise, because the INC is incapable of taking on Saddam

Hussein. They are weak and disorganized, according to officials in the administration, including officials who report directly to the Vice President and others, always in private in the latter case.

Let me say that all oppositions that lack external support, that lack a strategy with resources behind it that give it a reasonable prospect of success, are by definition weak, so it means nothing to say that an organization lacking the fundamental support it needs is going to be weak. It is inevitable.

As to the disorganization, I think the INC has come a very long way in organizing itself and you see in this room a number of representatives of the INC from all elements of Iraqi society who have come together in what is a very impressive display of unity.

Now, there are differences, to be sure, and the differences will always be larger when the prospects of success are smaller. The point is that it is well within the power of the United States—as a world leader and as a source of the resources necessary to mount an effective campaign against Saddam Hussein—to assist this opposition in a way that will assist its achieving cohesion and effectiveness, and it is within our power to help them design the plans by which they can effectively challenge Saddam's regime.

So the pessimism of the administration, the defeatism of the administration, the paralysis of the administration is, in fact, a self-fulfilling prophesy. If they say long enough and often enough that the opposition is weak and divided; if they withhold the support that the Congress has urged them to extend, then they can, of course, weaken the opposition and prevent it from achieving reasonable and attainable objectives.

So I hope very much that we will see a change in administration policy. It will probably take a new administration to accomplish that. I would be quite happy to see a new administration in any case, but one of the reasons for preferring a new administration is that we look forward to one that implements the law now on the books that requires support for the liberation of Iraq by those people who have been willing to run the risks and organize themselves to bring that about.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Mr. Perle, for those thoughtful comments. I look forward to some question and answer between the two of us.

Dr. Chalabi, I am pleased to see you again, although I am sorry it is here. I had hoped at this point in time that you would be in Iraq, organizing, pushing and prodding for the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime.

It has been some years ago that you first met with Members of Congress and we first expressed our support for your efforts and put forward resources to do that, and we certainly all thought by this point in time we would not still be meeting in hearings in Washington, DC, but that we would be pressing forward in your homeland with the coalition you have put together.

Yet we are here, and I want to hear what you have to say about the progress on implementing the Iraq Liberation Act. You might also take a moment, if you would, to introduce the other people of the INC that are here, and what groups they represent, so that we could have that for the record as well.

Dr. Chalabi.

STATEMENT OF DR. AHMAD CHALABI, MEMBER OF THE PRESIDENCY COUNCIL, IRAQI NATIONAL CONGRESS, LONDON, ENGLAND

Dr. CHALABI. Thank you, Senator Brownback. Let me first introduce my distinguished friends and colleagues, the leaders of the Iraqi National Congress.

First, I will start with Mr. Javal Talabani. Mr. Talabani is a leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, who has worked long and hard for the cause of democracy and human rights in Iraq, and rights of the Kurdish people in Iraq. He is a well-known leader internationally, and he has been of great support for the Iraqi National Congress and a tireless fighter.

Mr. Riyadh Al-Yawer is an Iraqi diplomat, and he is a man who has been working against tyranny and dictatorship in Iraq for over 4 years now, and he has worked tirelessly to help unite the INC.

Seyid Kadhim Al-Batatt, who came yesterday from Iraq, he is from the south. He is a leader of the opposition, the armed opposition to Saddam Hussein in the south, and he came here to put his case and the need for assistance before the American people.

On my left, my very good friend and colleague in fighting Saddam Hussein—in March 1995 we were together on the battlefield—Mr. Kusrat Rusol, who has been Prime Minister of Iraqi Kurdistan, and he has been fighting Saddam. He has personally suffered losses. His two children were killed by Saddam's bombs, and he himself suffered from wounds inflicted on him by Saddam. He has demonstrated a remarkable tenacity in continuing to fight Saddam, and his ability to do so is unchallenged.

Dr. Latif Rashid. He is a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and has been working with the INC for a long, long time. He was a founding member, and has made immense contributions to our fight against Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Hoyshar Zibari, a member of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan. He is a founding member of the Iraqi National Congress. He has fought Saddam in battles for many decades now, and he has personally suffered family losses due to Saddam's activities, and he has been a person who has worked to help us unite the INC and restore it to its current status.

I am sorry to say that Sharif Ali bin Hussein, Sheikh abu Hidah, Sheikh Mohammed Mohammed Ali have had to go for a TV interview with the Voice of America, but they, both of them, Sharif Ali is from the former royal family of Iraq, and his presence with us gives a sense for the people of Iraq that they look back with nostalgia to the days of the monarchy, when there was much more freedom, much more democracy than now, and he has been working very hard with us as a colleague to restore democracy in Iraq.

Sheikh Mohammed Mohammed Ali is a leader of the Islamic movement in Iraq, and has been a victim of Saddam, and he is a founding member of INC, and has worked very hard with us all those years.

Senator BROWNBACK. Very good. Welcome, all of you, and thank you for coming here.

Dr. CHALABI. Thank you, Senator Brownback.

This is the third time I have testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as the representative of the Iraqi National Congress and the Iraqi people. Each time, it is a greater honor. I am joined here today by the entire leadership of the Iraqi National Congress, and I am proud to bring you our united message to the U.S. Government.

Unfortunately, on this occasion I am the bearer of bad news. Since my last testimony a year ago Saddam Hussein has become a greater threat to the Iraqi people, to the Middle East region, and to the interests of the United States. Saddam's dictatorship is based on three pillars, money, foreign support, and terror. On all three fronts, he is resurgent.

Manipulation of the oil-for-food program, illegal smuggling of oil, and extortion of the Iraqi people are now providing Saddam with billions in cash for internal repression and external aggression. His intelligence service is resurgent.

In the past 2 weeks General Najib el Sadahay, a member of the Iraqi National Congress Central Council and the leading commander in the Iraqi Army, has received a videotape of the rape of one of his relatives in Baghdad by the intelligence service in an attempt to intimidate him. Many others have received that recently, but they have not chosen to speak out. He had the courage to do so, and I want to bring this to your attention now.

There are now massive investments in nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs unrestricted by United Nations inspections. Saddam succeeded in throwing out UNSCOM.

Foreign governments, including those of United States allies such as Qatar, Bahrain, and the UAE, have all restored full diplomatic relations with the Iraqi dictatorship in the past few weeks, providing Saddam's weapons acquisitions and terror networks with unfettered access to the outside world. He has large-scale intelligence operations going on right now in the UAE, including procurement of prohibited materials and smuggling them into Tehran. Russia, France, and other significant countries such as Italy are working for Saddam's interests on the international stage.

Saddam's internal terror continues to destroy our people. His abilities for external aggression are increased as a result of his increased funds and his increased foreign diplomatic access. Even so, however, Saddam remains vulnerable. Inside Iraq, he is continuously challenged by the Iraqi people, united in their hatred of his tyranny.

In the north, in Iraqi Kurdistan, Saddam's authority is almost nonexistent, extending only to intelligence operatives and paid agents. In the north, Iraqi National Congress member parties administer over 50,000 square kilometers of Iraqi territory independently and in opposition to Saddam. This was our base until Saddam attacked our base in August 1996 and killed our people.

Southern Iraq is in a state of latent revolution punctuated by increased armed rebellion against the regime. In the audience today is Seyid Kadhim Al-Batatt, a leader of the Iraqi National Congress' southern resistance to Saddam's regime. He left Iraq this weekend to bring us news of the fighting and a plea for U.S. protection and support.

In Baghdad, Saddam is continuously challenged. His security force is only able to suppress, not preempt frequent and large scale uprisings against his authority.

It is this universal Iraqi opposition to Saddam Hussein which the Iraqi National Congress embodies, and which is the only avenue toward peace in Iraq, a peace which can only be secured by Saddam's overthrow and the establishment of a new popular and democratic Federal Iraqi Government.

The benefits from Saddam's overthrow are clear. The Iraqi people will be free, free to govern themselves, free to cherish their children, free to employ their talents for good. The region will be free, free from the fear of Saddam's war-making, free from Saddam's terrorism, and free from the threat of Saddam's inhuman weapons of mass destruction, and the United States as the sole super power will be free from its excessive military commitments arrayed against a megalomaniac dictator who survives only on the indecision and the contradictions of the United States and international policies, which leads me to my central point.

Saddam's future, the future of the Iraqi people, and the future of the Middle East are dependent on the actions of the United States. It is an indisputable fact, if the United States is committed to Saddam's overthrow and the establishment of an Iraqi democratic government, it can happen, and happen quickly.

If the United States is not committed, our struggle for freedom will be long, painful, and bloody, both for the Iraqi people and the world. The Congress of the United States has recognized this fact and moved decisively against Saddam by overwhelming bipartisan majorities in both the House and the Senate, duly signed by the President. Congress has appropriated funds, provided constitutional authority, and ordered military support to the Iraqi National Congress.

The Iraq Liberation Act, the centerpiece of these congressional efforts, is historic legislation. In the ILA for the first time the United States has overtly committed itself to the overthrow of an illegal dictatorship and to support for the establishment of a democratic government in its place. The Iraqi people are forever grateful.

The Iraq Liberation Act is United States law. President Clinton signed the ILA on October 31, 1998. On November 15, 1998, he made the ILA the centerpiece of his Iraq policy. Yet despite bold words and professed commitment, almost nothing has been done. There has been virtually no military drawdown. Less than \$20,000 from a \$97 million authority. There has been virtually no financial support. Less than \$100,000 actually given to the INC.

This inaction is unfortunately part of a bitter history for the Iraqi National Congress' relations with the United States. In 1996, the Iraqi National Congress was abandoned to Saddam's invasion of northern Iraq despite U.S. guarantees of protection not only to the INC but to the 3½ million Iraqis living in the area.

Since that time, the INC has routinely been disparaged by administration officials from the NSC, the CIA, the State Department, and the Department of Defense, and while blaming the victim may provide temporary political cover for betrayal of U.S. in-

terests, ideals, and commitments, it has done little for the confidence of the Iraqi people or Iraq's neighbors.

Despite this record, the INC still looks to the United States for leadership, confident that the American people are with us against Saddam, and we are encouraged by the progress we have made in the last few days. Monday's meeting with Vice President Al Gore was very successful, continuing a long record of support for the Iraqi people's interests.

Senator Gore was one of the first U.S. officials to condemn Saddam's genocide against the Iraqi Kurds in 1988. I first met him in 1991, and he was instrumental in the development of U.S. support for the INC at that time. In 1993, he received the INC in Washington and again advanced our struggle against Saddam.

Since that time, he has been one of the strongest voices for the interests of the Iraqi people in the United States and internationally. As he begins his Presidential campaign, we welcome his clear calls for Saddam's overthrow and his forthright assertion that peace in the Middle East is impossible while Saddam remains in power.

Similarly, we welcome his actions this week as Vice President. U.S. commitment to military training for the INC under ILA authority is a promising step in the right direction, as is yesterday's announcement of U.S. support for the INC humanitarian relief projects in Iraq. With Vice President Gore's sponsorship we expect speedy progress and tangible results.

Nonetheless, we cannot rely on rhetoric. Our task is too urgent, and the need of the Iraqi people is too great. Our proposal for the \$8 million in fiscal year 2000 State Department economic support funds appropriated to the INC is on the administration's desk and has been since November. If it is approved before the end of this month we can begin humanitarian relief projects within 45 days and begin broadcasting operations in less than 30 days.

Our preliminary request for material and training under the ILA have been submitted since February. If accepted by the end of this month, effective INC military units, intelligence teams, and humanitarian aid workers can be operating in coordination with United States support by the end of August. We need these U.S. actions immediately, and we are counting on the word of the Vice President to deliver them.

The United States faces a clear choice. Sanctions, bombing, and containment are not a sustainable policy. Either Saddam must go, and go quickly, or he must be accommodated. If he is accommodated he will quickly develop nuclear weapons and become the dominant military power in the Gulf. If he is overthrown, Iraq can become the peaceful and prosperous country which is the interest of its people, the region, and the world.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Chalabi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. AHMAD CHALABI

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Saddam's dictatorship is based on three pillars: Money, foreign support, and terror. On all three fronts he is resurgent.

Manipulation of the oil for food program, illegal smuggling of oil, and extortion of the Iraqi people are now providing Saddam with billions in cash for internal repression and external aggression—including massive investments in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs, now unrestricted by United Nations inspections.

Foreign governments, including those of United States allies such as Qatar, Bahrain, and the UAE have restored full diplomatic relations with the Iraqi dictatorship—providing Saddam's weapons acquisition and terror networks with unfettered access to the outside world. Russia, France and other significant countries such as Italy are working for Saddam's interests on the international stage.

Saddam's internal terror continues to destroy our people, and his abilities for external aggression are increased, as a result of his increased funds and his increased foreign diplomatic access.

Even so, however, Saddam remains vulnerable. Inside Iraq, he is continuously challenged by the Iraqi people—united in their hatred of his tyranny. In the north, in Iraqi Kurdistan, Saddam's authority is weak, extending only to intelligence operatives and paid agents. In the north, Iraqi National Congress member parties administer over 50,000 square kilometers of Iraqi territory independently and in opposition to Saddam.

Southern Iraq is in a state of latent revolution, punctuated by increasing armed rebellion against the regime. In the audience today is Seyid Kadhim Al-Batatt, a leader of the Iraqi National Congress' southern resistance to Saddam's regime. He left Iraq this weekend, to bring us news of the fighting and a plea for U.S. protection and support.

In Baghdad, Saddam is continuously challenged, his security forces only able to suppress—not to preempt—frequent and large scale uprisings against his authority.

It is this universal Iraqi opposition to Saddam Hussein which the Iraqi National Congress embodies and which is the only avenue towards peace in Iraq—a peace which can only be secured by Saddam's overthrow and the establishment of a new, popular, and democratic Iraqi government.

The benefits from Saddam's overthrow are clear: The Iraqi people will be free, free to govern themselves, free to cherish their children, free to employ their talents for good. The region will be free, free from the fear of Saddam's war-making, free from Saddam's terrorism and free from the threat of Saddam's inhuman weapons of mass destruction. And the United States, as sole superpower, will be free from its excessive military commitments arrayed against a megalomaniac dictator who survives only on the indecision and contradictions of United States and international policies.

Which leads me to my central point. Saddam's future, the future of the Iraqi people, and the future of the Middle East are dependent on the actions of the United States. It is an indisputable fact, if the United States is committed to Saddam's overthrow and the establishment of an Iraqi democratic government it can happen and happen quickly. If the United States is not committed, our struggle for freedom will be long, painful and bloody—both for the Iraqi people and the world.

The Congress of the United States has recognized this fact and moved decisively against Saddam. By overwhelming bi-partisan majorities in both the House and the Senate, duly signed by the President, Congress has appropriated funds, provided constitutional authority and ordered military support to the Iraqi National Congress. The Iraq Liberation Act, the centerpiece of these Congressional efforts, is historic legislation. In the ILA, for the first time, the United States has overtly committed itself to the overthrow of an illegal dictatorship and to support for the establishment of a democratic government in its place. The Iraqi people are forever grateful.

The Iraq Liberation Act is United States law. President Clinton signed the ILA on December 31, 1998. On November 15, 1998, he made the ILA the centerpiece of his Iraq policy.

Yet, despite bold words and professed commitment, almost nothing has been done. There has been virtually no military drawdown, less than \$20,000 from a \$97 million authority. There has been virtually no financial support, less than \$100,000 actually given to the INC.

This inaction is unfortunately part of a bitter history for the Iraqi National Congress' relations with the U.S. In 1996, the INC was abandoned to Saddam's invasion of northern Iraq despite U.S. guarantees of protection—not only to the INC but to the 3.5 million Iraqis in the area.

Since that time, the INC has been routinely disparaged by administration officials from the NSC, the CIA, the State Department and the Department of Defense. And, while blaming the victim may provide temporary political cover for betrayal of U.S. interests, ideals and commitments, it has done little for the confidence of the Iraqi people or Iraq's neighbors.

Despite this record, the INC still looks to the United States for leadership, confident that the American people are with us against Saddam. And we are encouraged by the progress we have made in the last few days.

Monday's meeting with Vice President Al Gore was very successful—continuing a long record of support for the Iraqi people's interest by Mr. Gore. Senator Gore was one of the first U.S. officials to condemn Saddam's genocide against the Iraqi Kurds in 1988. I first met him in 1991 and he was instrumental in the development of U.S. support for the INC at that time. In 1993 he received the INC in Washington and again advanced our struggle against Saddam. Since that time, he has been one of the strongest voices for the interests of the Iraqi people in the United States and internationally. As he begins his presidential campaign, we welcome his clear calls for Saddam's overthrow and his forthright assertion that peace in the Middle East is impossible while Saddam remains in power.

Similarly, we welcome his actions this week as Vice President. U.S. commitment to military training for the INC under ILA authority is a promising step in the right direction, as is yesterday's announcement of U.S. support for the INC's humanitarian relief projects inside Iraq. With Vice President Gore's sponsorship we expect speedy progress and tangible results.

Nonetheless, we cannot rely on rhetoric. Our task is too urgent and the need of the Iraqi people too great.

Our proposal for the \$8 million in FY 2000 State Department Economic Support Funds appropriated to the INC is on the administration's desk and has been since November. If it is approved before the end of this month, we can begin humanitarian relief projects within 45 days and begin broadcasting operations in less than 30.

Our preliminary requests for material and training under the ILA have been submitted since February. If accepted by the end of this month, effective INC military units, intelligence teams and humanitarian aid workers can be operating in coordination with U.S. support by the end of August.

We need these U.S. actions immediately and are counting on the word of the Vice President to deliver them.

The United States faces a clear choice. Sanctions, bombing and containment are not a sustainable policy. Either Saddam must go, and go quickly, or he must be accommodated. If he is accommodated, he will quickly develop nuclear weapons and become the dominant military power in the Gulf. If he is overthrown, Iraq can become the peaceful and prosperous country which is the interest of its people, the region and the world.

Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Dr. Chalabi, for that strong statement. I have a vote that is on on the floor. I thought what we could do is have a couple of questions and exchange, and then take a short break and come back.

I am curious. You said opposition actions in the south continue on a regular basis and are growing, and that you had news directly from the south. Could the individuals here from the south inform us of what is taking place there? Would it be possible?

Dr. CHALABI. He can easily speak, Senator, if you wish.

Senator BROWNBACK. Could he here for a couple of minutes before I go vote and take a short break? I would be very interested to hear what is taking place in the south now. We get regular information out from the north of what is occurring, but not so much from the south.

If you would, identify yourself and state what is taking place in the south as far as opposition to Saddam.

Dr. CHALABI. He is from the southern marshes. He identifies himself among other fighters from the south. Dr. Hassan will translate.

Mr. AL-BATATT [as translated]. There is no secret in what Saddam is doing inside Iraq as far as crimes against humanity and against the Iraqi people. There has been no outrage in history that has not been committed by Saddam, Saddam's crimes against humanity and ecology and everything that has been created in this world. He has committed crimes against his neighbors as well as against his people and against humanity.

The draining of the marshes in Iraq caused destruction both to the ecology and to the animal and feed stock as well as the fish and the humans who live in the area.

Senator BROWNBACK. Can I ask what is going on in opposition to Saddam in the south?

Mr. AL-BATATT. All Iraqi peoples suffer from Saddam's actions. They are in opposition. We fight Saddam in the marshes of Iraq that have been drained but have been liberated, and the last battle was on 15 May of this year in the northern area near Basra. However, we fought alone, and we did not get any aid to help us fight to destroy Saddam and his forces.

I am sorry to say that the U.S. Government that has claimed support for human rights and humanity in the world and has taken upon itself the responsibilities—nobody forced it to—to protect the Iraqi people and even the Iraq Liberation Act, unfortunately American aircraft fly over us, as with our being continuously bombarded by Saddam's forces, and that to us implies what is happening is not reality.

We are an uprising in Iraq and the whole Iraqi people are in opposition to Saddam, but we need weapons, and other support such as radio stations and food support.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much for the updated information of what is taking place. I appreciate that greatly.

We have a vote on the floor, and I am going to have to go over to vote. I will be back in 10 minutes and will be able to walk over and back in that period of time, if you could stay with us for a few minutes.

Mr. Perle, Dr. Chalabi, I have a number of questions, particularly Dr. Chalabi for how your meeting with the Vice President went, and whether he pledged any new assistance, direct U.S. assistance, whether he made any specific offers of assistance and any timetable in which those offers of assistance would be forthcoming, because I would like to know if there were any specifics that were promised at that meeting with the Vice President on Monday.

So I will be back within 10 minutes. We will stand in recess for 10 minutes.

[Recess.]

Senator BROWNBACK. I will call the hearing back to order. We do have another vote scheduled shortly, so what I want to do is get through a couple of key questions for Dr. Chalabi about the meeting with the Vice President and for Mr. Perle, any thoughts he might have on the future administration, if it is a Republican administration, if it is a Bush administration, how might they deal with Iraq and the INC and the Iraq Liberation Act.

Dr. Chalabi, would you please illuminate us on the specifics from the meeting with the Vice President and any particular pledges of assistance, and timetables for that assistance to the INC?

Dr. CHALABI. The Vice President, we wrote him a letter. We wrote all the candidates a letter on January 21 requesting meetings. The Vice President answered on February 8, and we had the meeting on Monday, on 26 June.

In that meeting, the Vice President made a very strong statement that he does not believe there can be peace in Iraq or the Middle East while Saddam remains in power. He said he is committed to the Iraq Liberation Act, and it is the cornerstone of U.S. policy toward Iraq. He said he will help us get rid of Saddam, and that is the United States' position.

We made some specific requests. We asked first that the United States would change the rules of engagement of American aircraft so that Saddam's forces, poised to attack Iraqi civilians in the south and the north, in the liberated areas in the north, could become legitimate targets. This is especially poignant, in light of the statement of Seyid Kadhim Al-Batatt before you now about Saddam's oppressing the people.

We also requested that the United States would reverse the ecological disaster from the drying of the marshes. This can be done.

We requested that the United States would help us establish an international commission which would have access to the oil-for-food funds so that they can be spent for the benefit of the Iraqi people rather than sit in the bank, as they are now. The balance is in excess of \$8 billion now. Saddam refuses to spend it.

We want to take the idea of relief for the Iraqi people away from—either give Saddam more resources or lift the sanctions, that is not the way to do it. Giving Saddam more resources is tantamount to deprivation in Iraq.

We also ask that the United States affirm what is in the Iraq Liberation Act, that they would help the Iraqi people integrate into the international community and help lift the sanctions as soon as Saddam is removed and there is a democratic government.

We asked for all of those and we asked, of course, for a full implementation of the Iraq Liberation Act. The Vice President said they would help us with training. We have submitted names, and he said he would help us with training speedily. He said by the fall they will train all those people.

Senator BROWNBAC. Let me ask you about that, train all those people. There was mention of about 115.

Dr. CHALABI. We have submitted two lists, one 21 and the other 120.

Senator BROWNBAC. Train to do what?

Dr. CHALABI. The training is restricted to seven areas, all of them nonlethal.

Senator BROWNBAC. So it is nonlethal training these people would be submitted to?

Dr. CHALABI. Yes. Some of the training is useful, such as logistics, communications, and communications security for military operations, but there is no lethal training.

Senator BROWNBAC. Why was he resistant to the lethal training?

Dr. CHALABI. We do not really understand, Senator. There is resistance in the administration to provide lethal training. We have some theories, but we do not really know why.

Senator BROWNBAC. But he pledged to you that by this fall there would be some 140 INC people trained in nonlethal areas, some of these areas you would find useful and others you do not particularly understand, and you do not understand the reason for the resistance to lethal training?

Dr. CHALABI. We do not. The Iraq Liberation Act is meant to liberate Iraq. You cannot liberate Iraq by treating wounded people. We need to liberate Iraq by fighting Saddam, and that is what we need.

We need all the assistance we can get in terms of weapons, because there are tens of thousands of fighters fighting Saddam or confronting Saddam now in the north. Saddam was about to attack the area in late May this year, and he massed troops. The Kurdish forces, if they were given some antitank weapons, they can resist that.

In the south, Saddam bombards them with artillery and he attacks them with tanks. If they have some antitank weapons, if they have any kind of communications equipment, antitank weapons, some kind of weaponry that can confront the superior armor and artillery of Saddam, he will lose control of the area.

The Iraqi army is not fighting really in the south. They are forced and coerced into making these movements, but there are many, many generals and many officers who left Saddam's army and are now sitting in the liberated areas in northern Iraq ready to join training for the Iraq Liberation Act now, but they are sitting there with no assistance and no prospect of going anywhere, and they are wondering why.

Senator BROWNBAC. What is the administration's resistance to providing any sort of antitank weaponry to the Iraqi National Congress, or the people that are fighting against Saddam? Why would they not provide that equipment?

Dr. CHALABI. Well, it is lethal and they say they are not giving lethal equipment, Senator, it seems to me.

Senator BROWNBAC. Did they give you a specific reason as to why they would not provide lethal assistance?

Dr. CHALABI. Yes. They say that we are not ready and we do not want you to jump into confronting Saddam and get killed in the process.

Senator BROWNBAC. In the period we have had the Iraq Liberation Act, a period of 2 years, that they have said you are not ready, they will not provide any assistance or training in lethal weaponry or any assistance or training at all yet?

Dr. CHALABI. Senator, the idea of the Iraq Liberation Act is to enable us to make us ready to fight Saddam. That is the whole purpose of the Iraq Liberation Act, to enable us to train and to equip us for this purpose. We really do not understand what is the thinking.

There is another excuse saying the regional countries object to this, that they do not want us trained, but our experience with the regional countries is, they ask, is the United States serious? Why are they not implementing the law?

Senator BROWNBAC. I ask the same question. For how long have we had this available to be trained, to provide this equipment to you, and that it has not occurred.

Dr. CHALABI. Indeed. I think we have now close to 18 months since the Iraq Liberation Act has been passed. We work very hard. We established—we demonstrated time and time again the unity of the Iraqi National Congress, and we have written many times to the administration with everybody requesting implementation and assistance.

Senator BROWNBAC. Over that period of 18 months, what training has been offered to the INC?

Dr. CHALABI. We have so far—they have given us a syllabus from the Pentagon of courses, which include civil-military affairs. Three people were trained on civil-military affairs back in November, and that is the cost of the \$20,000, the cost to train them.

Other courses which were offered were field medicine, repair of equipment. Communications has not been offered yet. They say they are going to offer it. They are offering a war crimes training. This would be useful, we feel, in the collection of evidence and pursuing Saddam, but again that is nonlethal. They have offered training in public affairs, speaking and communications, and writing press releases, and also in terms of giving press conference and addressing the media.

Senator BROWNBAC. And that is the extent of the training that has been offered to you over the 18 months?

Dr. CHALABI. Indeed, that is what has been offered.

Senator BROWNBAC. And the administration continues to say you are just not ready to go up against Saddam, but we are not going to provide you the means to get ready to challenge Saddam.

Dr. CHALABI. That is basically the sum of it.

Senator BROWNBAC. Well, I am terribly disappointed from when we started this process, and we have continually pressed the administration and nothing is forthcoming, and it strikes me as mostly just a stall of where we are going to play this game out to the end of the administration and we are not going to do anything legitimate or real, just enough to provide press cover that we are actually trying to do something here, and then nothing happens.

Dr. CHALABI. Senator, I would say to you that we need to work with the United States on a plan of action which will have a military component to get rid of Saddam quickly. We are not here to make civil war in Iraq. We are here to make a military force to provide Iraqi army units a measure of assurance that there is United States support and they will join us.

This is very important to note. The Iraq Liberation Act is designed to help us create this force so that it can become a catalyst for all the forces fighting Saddam to join us. We need that plan now. We need to work it, and this fiction that this boogie man, that the opposition is not united, must be put behind us now.

Senator BROWNBAC. How did the Vice President react to the request for the change in the rules of engagement for U.S. aircraft to be able to target massed military operations that Saddam has, particularly in the south? How did he react to that proposal?

Dr. CHALABI. He did not comment on it immediately, but we were told he has today in the Pentagon, that this is under study.

Senator BROWNBAC. It is under study, but no timetables were given?

Dr. CHALABI. No, there were no timetables given.

Senator BROWNBACK. Mr. Perle, I want to direct a question to you. You have worked in the administration before, know your views on foreign policy, and particularly have some discussions with the Republican presumptive nominee, George Bush. How would he react? What would he do on dealing with Iraq?

Mr. PERLE. Governor Bush has said that we should, and he would, fully implement the Iraq Liberation Act. I think we all understand what that means. It means a serious and sustained effort to assist the opposition with a view to bringing down Saddam's regime. I am confident that when the Governor says that would be his policy, he means what he says.

I came to Washington 31 years ago, and I must say that in that period I have not seen a sustained hypocrisy that parallels the current administration's public embrace of the Iraq Liberation Act and its dilatory tactics aimed at preventing any progress from taking place under that act.

That will not be the case in a Bush administration, and I am absolutely convinced that if the Governor held the view that the current administration holds, which is one of opposition to the ILA, he would have the courage of his convictions and state it openly, and he certainly would not sign into law a piece of legislation that he had no intention of implementing.

If the administration—the current administration—is now prepared to change its policy, and I must say it remains to be seen, there are some things they could do immediately that would be persuasive. They could begin by reassigning Frank Ricciardone, who has been designated as the liaison with the Iraqi National Congress, and who has been engaged principally in the delaying tactics that have produced the result you just heard about. That is, 2 years and no action. He should be given a useful assignment and removed from his current position, because nothing is going to happen under his sponsorship.

Second, the administration could appoint one official, just one at a senior level who believes in the goals and objectives of the Iraq Liberation Act and who would honestly seek to implement the law as the law has been written and approved.

I cannot, as I look through the list of administration officials responsible for this policy, find a single official who is sympathetic to the goals and objectives of the Iraq Liberation Act, so we should not be surprised to find that even these most recent promises disappear into the upper atmosphere as soon as the spotlight of attention is removed.

This hearing, and I hope you will hold subsequent hearings, is very important for focusing attention on these pledges, these promises, and these commitments. If you are able to do so early in the fall, I would hope that you could look back and say, now, what has happened since the last promises were made?

And I hope that this time there will be some real progress to report, but I must say to you that unless the strategy is to bring down Saddam by inducing fatal laughter, the idea of training in civil military relations and the writing of press releases is not the way to advance the purposes of the Iraq Liberation Act.

Senator BROWNBACK. I agree. Well, thank you, gentlemen, both very much, and I want to once again plead with the administration

to take the Iraq Liberation Act seriously, to implement it. They still have time to press forward with doing these things that they have promised, that they have stated time and again that they would do, and I am calling on the administration to do those in the remaining months of this administration.

I would impress particularly on the Vice President to do as he has stated and to do far more. The training of 140 in nonlethal training I suppose is something, but it is not much, and I hope that they will do far more and far greater than that, along the lines of some of the things that you have articulated, Dr. Chalabi, that this should be reviewed and engaged with all speed.

Thank you both very much for being here, and we may very well meet yet again this fall, though I hope not, and I hope that we have action taking place that we can be pleased about during the remaining months of this administration.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:30 a.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]

